



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 10, 2020, Revised September 11, 2020

TO: Attn: Kristy L. Weis, Vice President & Principal Project Manager
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(via email)

RE: Addendum to the Supplemental Historic Preservation Guidelines Review
Market Street Tower/"Block 8" Project Revisions

FROM: Leslie A.G. Dill, Historic Architect

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum provides supplemental design review for the Market Street Tower/"Block 8" Development Project in San José. The memorandum serves as an addendum to the previously prepared *Historic Resource Project Assessment* report from January 2019, which was based on a previous design package from September 2018, and the subsequent Supplemental memorandum review dated June 15, 2020 and revised July 9, 2020, based on revised designs.

An updated set of architectural renderings were forwarded to Archives & Architecture; the following analysis provides a summary of the review of the design with regard to the revised design's compatibility with the historic resources adjacent to and near the project site. The original report included analysis for two associated projects. The subsequent reviews, including this one, only address the development of the Market Street Tower/"Block 8."

Executive Summary:

The currently proposed Market Street Tower/"Block 8" Project remains substantially compatible with the surrounding historic properties. The proposed project's design does not adversely impact the Plaza de César Chávez/Market Plaza, the Westin San José/St. Claire Hotel, the St. Claire Apartments/St. Clair Building, the Dohrman Building/Trinkler-Dohrman Building, the Valley Title Building/Hale's Department Store, the Twohy Building, or the Four Points by Sheraton/Montgomery Hotel, either directly or indirectly or by cumulative effect with other projects. The integrity of these historic resources would be preserved.

Construction mitigations continue to be recommended per the original report.

SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION (REVISIONS)

Per the earlier reports, the Market Street Tower Project on Block 8 is on the north side of West San Carlos Street between South Market and South First Streets. The project is addressed as 282 South Market St., and its Assessor Parcel Number is 259-42-080.

The most recent design revisions are presented in a pair of renderings titled *block 8 San Jose, California, Perspective View* dated August 20 and 27, 2020 and in a 75-page set of drawings titled *SDP – Revision 1 Block 8*. The design versions have been prepared by Arquitectonica for the owner, The Sobrato Organization, and forwarded electronically by David J. Powers & Associates, Inc. for review. Only the primary design sheets were reviewed for this report.

It is understood that the high-rise design was revised to accommodate parking equipment at the highest garage level. This revision has resulted in a building that is similar in overall height as the previous iteration but has fewer stories. The primary exterior revisions consist of the following:

- The top parking level within the “veil” (the fifth floor) is taller than it was previously, resulting in one-and-one-half-height window glazing at this level.
- Some of the veil elements that top out at this level are now higher at their upper corners, to accommodate the taller parking level. They are not wider, and the swooping features are steeper in these instances.
- The top levels of the building towers are closer in relative height.

SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT REVIEW

This review confirms and updates the previous analyses. These reviews utilized the 2004 Draft *San José Downtown Historic Guidelines* and the 2019 *San José Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards*, as well as addressing the potential for cumulative effects. The conclusions of the report are incorporated into the Integrity Analysis at the end of this memorandum.

2004 DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

The previous 2004 Downtown Historic Design Guideline analyses that are not affected by the revised floor heights, heights of the veil corners, or the roof tower proportions are not reviewed again. These guidelines include the following:

- *Lot Patterns (1)*
- *Corner Elements (4)*
- *Rear Facades (5)*
- *Entries (6)*
- *Exterior Materials (7),*
- *Vehicular and Pedestrian Access (8)*

The design review guidelines that are affected by the revisions are updated in this supplementary memorandum. These include the following two guidelines:

- *Massing (2)*
- *Facades (3)*

MASSING (2) – Updated Analysis

Updated Revised Analysis: The revised design, with its articulated, curved lower-level “veil” features, varies the perception of the massing. The quarter-round swoops in the design divide the lower area from the upper area, providing shadow lines that create a visual break in the overall perceived building mass. The placement of the swooping forms also accentuates the vertical divisions within the building forms, splitting each façade into paired masses. The floor plans illustrate the vertical delineation from the lower floors to the top of the building.

The design also features a subtle differentiation between the “shadow box” effect of the parking garage glazing and the upper level vision glass, along with a differentiation of floor heights from garage to office level. The changes in façade detailing between the lower and the upper levels are proposed to provide a form of “articulation” that visually breaks down the massing between the lower five levels and the upper tower elements, even though it has minimal impact on the sculptural form. The height of this “break” in the tower façade is half a story higher than the previous design, but the overall proportions do not change substantially.

The revised color of the “gap” filler material at the upper five stories of the two taller towers will have the effect of connecting these floors into a visually perceptible group. The dimensions these two groupings are proposed to be similar to the overall dimensions of the surrounding historic buildings, creating a perception of similar massing elements. The color change also provides a stronger visual cap for the towers, altering the perception of the towers’ previously monumental verticality. This color change, in its soffit-like position, will be primarily visible from the streetscape, where the issue of perceived scale is most important. The difference in height between the offset tower elements is less in the current version of the design than previously. The “gap” filler material continues to provide differentiation and visually groups the upper floors.

The currently proposed project, including its slightly revised “veil” elements and its continued visual groupings of slightly revised upper floor levels, remains compatible with the Historic Massing Guideline.

FACADES (3) – Updated Analysis

Updated Revised Analysis: The revised design includes “articulation in form, material, and detailing...” at the base of the building where it is needed to provide pedestrian scale compatible with the subarea. The revised design includes forms and detailing that are of a height that provides pedestrian scale, such as the curving “veil” forms that curve up to four and a half stories in height above the ground floor, relating to the overall heights of the nearby historic buildings. The placement of awning elements at the entrances, as well as the retail and lobby heights, relate to the historic subarea. The revised design includes solid panels of textured precast material within the curved areas, which relate in textural scale and overall size with the masonry of the historic buildings. The textured solid material will also clad the piers that echo the scale and materials of the structure systems of the historic buildings. The revised façade illustrates a streetscape with widths that are compatible with the pattern of retail storefronts, and storefront detailing in keeping with the complexity of the historic streetscape. The South First Street façade includes a storefront at the northeast corner, providing a “bridge” of

storefront display areas and a rhythm of retail entrances along the sidewalk from the Historic Landmark Montgomery Hotel building to the St. Clair Apartment Building.

The solid materials used in the “veil” elements are compatible in overall height with adjacent historic buildings; their widths are compatible with the overall widths of the surrounding historic façades. The tops of the “veil” elements echoes the height of the historic cornices, the base of the “veils” provides a datum line with the historic ground-floor cornices. The proposed detailing of the overlays of glazing and precast panels provides depth within the new façade, in keeping with the depth of detailing in the historic masonry buildings (and a contrasting component to the sleek modernist curtain wall with shingled glazing and its consistent patterns of shadow lines).

The currently proposed project, with its “veil” elements and its enhanced pedestrian-scaled streetscape, can still be found compatible with the Façades Guideline.

In the previous analysis, the project, as a Modern design in an area of historic buildings, was identified as not creating a false sense of historicism. This conclusion has not changed with the revised design.

2019 DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

The previous 2019 Downtown Design Guidelines & Standards analyses that are not affected by the revised floor heights, heights of the veil corners, or the roof tower proportions are not reviewed again. These guidelines include the following:

- *GUIDELINE 4.2.2 – Massing Relationship to Context*
- *GUIDELINE 4.2.3 – Civic Icon Adjacency*
- *GUIDELINE 4.2.4 – Historic Adjacency (3) Elements [materials]*
- *GUIDELINE 4.2.4 – Historic Adjacency (4) Ground Floor [pedestrian entries and ground floor ceiling height].*

The design review guidelines that are affected by the revisions—and were reviewed again for this memorandum—include the following:

- *GUIDELINE 4.2.4 – Historic Adjacency (1) Massing*
- *GUIDELINE 4.2.4 – Historic Adjacency (2) Façade*

GUIDELINE 4.2.4 – HISTORIC ADJACENCY

(1) Massing

a) Relate Podium Level building massing to the scale of Historic Context buildings.

Updated Analysis: The building design, as currently proposed, does not include a stepped podium mass; instead, the building is articulated with exterior elements that relate visually in dimension to the height, width, and massing scale of the historic buildings. The “veil” elements provide depth in the façade as well as emphasizing the lower floors of the building at datum lines that relate to the historic surrounding context. See also the 2004 Draft *Downtown Historic Design Guidelines* “Massing Guideline” analysis, above.

b) Design buildings with rectilinear rather than curved and diagonal forms.

Updated Analysis: The building uses substantial rectilinear forms in its site plan, its ground floor design, and its detailing. The curving elements are made up of planar and orthogonal elements, compatible in size, materials, and scale with the historic context. The design can be found to be consistent with this Standard. The building, although spiraling in form, interacts with the Historic Context buildings and streetscape with many rectilinear spatial relationships.

The curvilinear forms can be considered as meeting the initial General Guideline of 4.2.4 to “Design a building with *Historic Adjacency* to stand on the quality of its own architecture, not as a backdrop for historic buildings.

c) *Use cornice articulation at the Podium Level at a height comparable to the heights of Historic Context buildings.*

Updated Analysis: There are no applied cornices; however, the building does include demarcations/articulation at heights analogous to the heights of elements within the Historic Context building designs. At the proposed building, there is a change of materials between the retail and lobby display level and the recessed “veil” area. This transition in transparency and materials corresponds with the ground-level cornice lines of the adjacent historic buildings. The proposed ground floor design also includes detailing, such as awnings and signage, that support the continuity of the streetscape scale and transom heights.

There is a change in materials and depth of the façade at the swoop that defines the “veil” elements. This change of material continues to relate to the overall heights of the adjacent historic buildings and their roof cornices. The subtle change in materials and window height at the top of the parking garage level at the Market Street Tower/“Block 8” approximately follows a datum line now proposed to be slightly above the height of the Historic Context buildings. This datum line is close enough in height to the historic subarea for the design to remain compatible and visually understandable. This continuity creates a connection between the historic and proposed buildings.

Although some of the “veil” elements are slightly taller at their upper corners, the swoop of these elements is steeper. Therefore, the overall square footage of exposed solid wall material remains similar to the previous area of the “veil,” and the revised design remains proportionate with the surrounding masonry historic buildings.

d) *Use Streetwall Continuity with Historic Context buildings*

Analysis: The proposed building meets the sidewalk in a way consistent with the historic context. The retail display is continuous, and the pattern of entries is similar and compatible.

The proposed project can still be found substantially compatible with the Massing Standards (a-d).

GUIDELINE 4.2.4 – HISTORIC ADJACENCY

(2) Façade

e) *Use articulation that creates façade divisions with widths similar to Historic Context buildings on the same side of the street*

Updated Analysis: To provide a rhythm of appropriately scaled elements along San José streetscapes, this Standard requires that a proposed new building must include articulation in the façades that relate to the widths of the historic buildings adjacent. The rhythm of the width of the historic buildings is approximately one-eighth to one-sixth of the size of the long city blocks and about half of the short city blocks. The range of widths varies from 120 to 190 feet. The west elevation of the Twohy Building is the narrowest façade, at about 65 feet, but its north side is approximately 150 feet wide. The proposed building is divided into four tower elements that are accentuated at the ground level by the swooping “veil” elements. The tower bases and the divisions between the veil elements divide the building into two widths of less than 85 and less than 95 feet on South First Street and divided into two elements of less than 140 and less than 125 feet wide along San Carlos Street (with a larger than 25-foot gap to articulate this division.

The widths of the “veil” elements are not changed in the current proposal, and the patterns of demarcation remain compatible with the historic patterns of building widths in the area.

f) Do not simulate historic architecture to achieve these guidelines

Updated Analysis: The proposed new building continues to not simulate historic architecture.

g) Place windows on façades visible from the windows of the adjacent Historic Context buildings.

Updated Analysis: The current building design has a service area at the proposed new alley facing the landmark Montgomery Hotel at the ground floor where the historic hotel also has a service level. The new building is proposed to include shadowbox glazing at the parking garage levels above this shared service area, facing the hotel. The proposed glazing reasonably corresponds to the level of the historic building where it starts to have window, as well. The historic building will overlook a glazed exterior and “veil” design features, not a solid, utilitarian stucco or masonry wall.

The proposed project, as currently revised, continues to be compatible with the Façade Standards (e-g).

CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Per the previous supplemental report, the most recently proposed project revisions do not change the cumulative impact analysis. The change in one level’s floor height, the change in height of two of the towers, and the height of some upper “veil” corners do not impact the patterns of development; how the proposed project relates to these patterns, or change the analysis with regard to the positive or negative impact of the project on the surrounding area.

UPDATED INTEGRITY ANALYSIS

As analyzed above, the currently proposed project design can still be found to be substantially consistent with the San José Guidelines with regard to “infill” projects in the downtown. This indicates that the design of the project has a size, massing, scale, function, and materials generally compatible with the historic buildings in the immediate area. Using this updated analysis, further conclusions can be revisited regarding the potential impact of a proposed

project on nearby historic resources. For the basis of historic integrity analysis or definitions, see the previous supplemental memorandum. The updated analysis continues to utilize the seven aspects of historic integrity indicated by the National Register and State of California's definition of authenticity of a resource. Some of the aspects of integrity cannot be applied to projects on parcels adjacent to historic resources, including the aspects of location, artisanship, and materials because these aspects are not proposed for alteration of separate properties. For the purposes of understanding the impacts of a proposed project on a neighboring property, the aspects of design, setting, feeling, and association can be reviewed.

Design

The project as revised would not have a direct physical impact on the integrity of the designs of any of the historic resources. Because the historic resources are adjacent to and near the project, rather than sharing the site, the designs of the buildings on nearby parcels would remain physically untouched. With regard to the visual understanding of the design, the analyses using the 2004 Draft *City of San José Downtown Historic Design Guidelines* and the 2019 *San José Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards* indicate that the size, massing, patterns of entrances, materials, scale, detailing, and separation of the buildings would be compatible; therefore, the historic designs of the Montgomery Hotel, the Twohy Building, the St. Claire Hotel and St. Claire Apartments, and the Dohrman Building, as well as the design understood to be encapsulated in the Hale's Department Store building, would not be overwhelmed, diminished, or made to appear out of scale or balance. Therefore, the integrity of the designs of the historic resources would continue to be preserved.

Setting

The proposed high-rise project, as currently proposed, would alter the current setting of the nearby historic resources, but the historic resources have already lost their original settings in this locale. When the historic resources were first built, this area was developing as a dense commercial district, replacing residences that had scattered the area in the nineteenth century. The buildings shared party walls and formed a continuous streetscape along South First Street. During the latter part of the twentieth century, buildings were demolished for urban renewal and redevelopment efforts. The proposed project site has been vacant for about 20 years, and was largely vacant prior to that, only containing one mid-rise building with a smaller footprint, surrounded by parking.

With little built historical context remaining at this site, the proposed project cannot be considered to have a new adverse impact on the settings of the various historic resources in the area. The reestablishment of a commercial streetscape is a positive outcome on the setting of the historic buildings. The design of the proposed new building, with an emphasis on the lower levels that responds to the heights, scales, and materials of the historic commercial buildings, creates a compatible pedestrian setting. The proposed revisions at the project's upper levels do not change this conclusion.

Feeling

The surrounding historic resources feature masonry or stucco façades with decorative bas-relief, vertical inset windows, and other historic design elements that provide balanced and rich

compositions. Each building has its own feeling that embodies a commercial mid-rise building of its era. Each building in the area is distinctive and conveys strong connotations. Each can “hold its own” in contrast with and adjacent to a project that conveys a feeling of twenty-first-century modernism. The integrity of feeling of the historic resource would be preserved.

Association

The associations of the historic buildings will continue to be represented adjacent to and nearby the proposed new construction. The new construction, as revised, would not diminish the architectural beauty or historic narratives that are embodied in these landmarks. The historic integrity of the significance of each resource will be preserved.

Conclusions

Although the setting would be altered, the historic setting had been previously lost with regard to the significance of the resources over time; the adjacent design, as currently revised, is compatible in scale and detailing at the streetscape; the feelings and associations of the historic resources would remain intact. Therefore, the proposed construction of the Market Street Tower/“Block 8” Project would not impact the historic integrity of the resources in the area.

CONCLUSIONS

The revised proposed Market Street Tower/“Block 8” Project can continue be found to be substantially compatible with the 2004 Draft *City of San José Downtown Historic Design Guidelines* and the 2019 *City of San José Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards* for properties adjacent to Historic Context Buildings and in its Downtown subarea. It can be determined that it does not create an adverse cumulative impact with recent, current, and future development activity in the area. The historic integrity of the immediately surrounding historic resources can be found to be preserved.

Construction mitigations continue to be recommended per the original report.